MONTEREY NEWS

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The Town

by Maggie Leonard

Wind Turbines Siting

In the month of December the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act (WESRA), a bill in the Massachusetts legislature, took the political center stage in the hill towns of western Massachusetts, and Monterey was no exception. As was reported in the December *Monterey News*, Laurily Epstein, Holly Montgomery, Eric Montgomery, and Monica Webb approached the Select Board last month to request that the board draft a letter to State Senator Benjamin Downing opposing the proposed legislation. The group believes that the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act removes local control from the wind-turbine-siting process and provides no benefit to the towns. The Select Board discussed the bill briefly, and Select Board chair Wayne Burkhart expressed concern and frustration about outright opposition to alternative energy proposals.

At the December 5th Select Board meeting Peter Murkett met with the board, stating that he had read the article referring to WESRA in the *Monterey News*, and requesting that the Select Board refrain from

Monterey scenes, 2011 (cw from top l.): Firemen's Steak Roast, July 30 (photo, Felix Carroll); Pumpkin roll at Community Center Fun Day, Oct. 8 (photo Bonner McAllester); River Road repair, one of many after Hurricane Irene, Aug. 28 (photo Maynard Forbes); George Emmons and Steve Snyder, after 29 in. of snow fell on October 30 (photo courtesy Steve Snyder).

sending their letter until he could compose a letter to them stating his point of view. The opposing opinions among Monterey citizens were a microcosm of the larger debate taking place across Massachusetts. Senator Downing was expected to make a position statement on the bill on December 15 in Great Barrington.

A brief history of WESRA: The initial bill was proposed in 2010 and passed in the Massachusetts House, but died in the Senate when the session ended before it could be considered. The resolution was resubmitted in 2011 and enjoyed strong support from Governor Deval Patrick. Senator Downing, who is the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunication, Utilities, and Energy, stated, "The best answers come from listening" and he required that multiple public hearings be held across the state. A hearing held in Hancock in September was attended by both supporters and opponents of the bill. It must have been an interesting experience for those with environmental concerns and concerns about local control to be on the opposite side of the table from proponents of the bill such as The Sierra Club.

Controversy continued to swirl around the wind bill in the ensuing months. Opponents of the bill are concerned about loss of local control in siting the industrial wind turbines, in combination with the negative impacts that turbines could have on real estate values in the hill towns (in an already depressed market), and find little in the way of benefits for the towns. They also expressed concern that the negative impacts on the scenic beauty of the Berkshires could affect tourism, which brings needed revenue to the area. Finally, opponents of the bill complained that no siting standards were outlined in the bill and requested that Downing craft a bill that includes siting standards.

Supporters of the bill are pleased that the state is actively pursuing alternative energy solutions that may help address climate change and lessen our dependence on foreign oil (pointing out that currently it is easier to site fossil fuel facilities in Massachusetts than wind turbines). They contend that the bill does not circumvent local control and that the process for siting the wind turbines should not be lengthy. As an example they pointed to a proposed wind facility in Florida, Massachusetts, that took thirteen years to get the necessary permits. Proponents of WESRA also did not want to see it fail due to NIMBY (not in my backyard) opposition.

Back to the Monterey Select Board. On December 12 Peter Murkett submitted his letter, which outlined the ways in which the proposed bill does not eliminate local control and stated that a lot of the controversy generated by WESRA is based on misinformation. Murkett read his letter, which describes how the bill favorably addresses local control (a copy of the letter appears in this issue of the *Monterey News*; see p. 6). Taking into consideration both sides of the argument, The Select Board revised their letter to Senator Downing to state: "*Having heard from a number of Monterey residents concerned about the current wind siting bill, the Select Board would like to convey our hope that you will not support any bill that limits local control over the siting of wind turbines in the Berkshires. Quite apart from our individual views on the pros and cons of wind power, we do all feel that local control is an essential component of any siting bill.*"

On December 15 Senator Downing held a press conference in Great Barrington reversing his position on WESRA, stating he was sending the bill back to the State House for further study. He said, "One thing that just about everybody agreed on was the need for siting standards." Most people also agreed that solar power should be investigated and that energy efficiency and conservation should be a major part of any energy plan for the state. Downing, who received kudos from the bill's opponents for reconsidering his position, would

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like to reintroduce a bill in the current session but admitted that the study process may be long and complicated.

Town Employee Compensation

The Select Board, the Finance Committee, and representatives for full-time town employees continue to work on employee compensation packages in an evolving conversation that, hopefully, will lead to the creation of a yearly systematic review of salaries and benefits. The Select Board charged Interdepartmental Secretary Melissa Noe with investigating the policies in similar small towns in southern Berkshire County. Noe performed an exhaustive survey in an attempt to compare the compensation and benefits packages of town similar in size to Monterey. Both Noe and Finance Committee member Dan Moriarty contended that the difficulty with these surveys is that each town has positions and duties that are unique, making it hard to correlate and compare salaries and benefit packages. Noe used two methods to determine with which towns to compare with Monterey: population within +/-500 of Monterey's, and towns with tax rates within 1percent of Monterey's. That meant comparing the salary and benefits package of Monterey (pop. 961) mostly with those of Egremont (pop. 1225) and Alford (pop. 494), although there was also research from other towns.

Lake Garfield near town beach, Dec. 27, 2011 (photo, Glynis Marsh)

On December 5 the Select Board, the Finance Committee, and town employee representatives Maynard Forbes, Gareth Backhaus, and Michael Johnson discussed clothing allowances, on-call stipends, and the possibility of having three-year contracts. One proposal was to provide the Highway Department with a $400 per person per year clothing allowance to cover the costs of replacing work boots and OSHA-approved jackets, as well as pants and other items. Monterey is the only town in the survey that does not provide a clothing allowance for its highway crew.

A proposal to institute an on-call stipend for Police Department and Highway Department employees was discussed. It was noted that most towns in southern Berkshire County provide both their full-time police officers and highway crew with on-call stipends. Police Chief Gareth Backhaus stated that it is difficult to compare police departments in South County because some of the other towns surveyed use the State Police as the responding agency. Select Board member Jon Sylbert said, "I don't think anyone is prepared to question the police coverage in our town. Monterey has a history of not using the State Police, and I don't think anyone wants to change that." Backhaus

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suggested that an on-call stipend of $100 per person, per week, for a total of an additional $5,200 per year be considered. Officer Michael Johnson added that when police are on-call they cannot leave their jurisdiction, they cannot attend events, and they must be near a phone at all times. Select Board member Sylbert noted that according to the survey Sheffield, Egremont, and Stockbridge all have police departments that cover all shifts in a patrol car and that all the employees are paid more than those in Monterey; he said, "Even with the additional $5,200 per person per year our costs for policing are considerably lower than the surrounding towns that are covering shifts 24/7."

The Highway Department has also requested an on-call stipend of $150 per employee per month, but only for the months of November through March. Director of Operations Forbes stated, "The Highway Department crew cannot leave town for five months of the year. They have to be available at all times. Stockbridge pays $120 per person per week for an on-call stipend. I don't think our request is outrageous. My crew shows up to work every time there is a snow storm or a disaster."

Next came the subject of contracts. Forbes stated that Great Barrington, New Marlborough, and Sheffield all have three-year contracts. Sylbert countered that any union town would have a contract and said that it would be difficult for Monterey to do it since the money for the salaries is appropriated on a yearly basis at the annual town meeting. Sylbert went on to say, "We are looking to establish a procedure. Do we want to have an annual review with salary increases that are predetermined?" Maynard Forbes mentioned that Finance Committee member Michael Storch had created a spreadsheet several years ago that codified a process for salary increases. Select Board chair Wayne Burkhart asked, "What happened to that?" Storch replied, "The Select Board at that time turned it down." Forbes said that he still had the information on a disc and would bring it to the next meeting.

Storch asked Forbes about the request for a contract and Forbes replied that for the past few years wages for town employees had stagnated: "Last year people were surprised and disappointed that there were no raises and that they read about it in the *Monterey News*. People want to know what's going on with their salaries and what's going to happen."

During the December 12th Select Board meeting the aforementioned chart created years ago by Michael Storch was presented with numbers updated by Forbes. The chart had a vertical axis showing number of years worked (seniority) and the horizontal axis represented performance/merit. Forbes set the chart up with all employees starting at the first step. Immediately debate ensued, with Sylbert stating, "You can't start people who have already worked for the town for twenty years at one! One of the purposes of the chat is to reward seniority." Storch said, "Everybody starts at one. The onus is on the Select Board to see who advances due to merit, etc." Sylbert did not budge: "If we used this we have to list employees using their actual years of service—otherwise what's the point? You can't reward experience and seniority if everyone starts at one."

Select Board chair Burkhart said, "These are important procedural things, but isn't the most important thing to figure out by what method we keep town employees advancing? For instance we could set a percentage." Everyone then began discussing cost of living allowance (COLA) increases. Storch addressed Burkhart's question: "To date the town has been considering the COLA increases a raise. There was no schedule of raises; in lieu of raises it was based on cost of living." Moriarty said, "The word COLA is being thrown around here, and that's not what we should base the system on. It was only a guideline. We need a system where year one they get X; year two they get X+1;

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year three they get X+2; and so on." Police Chief Backhaus suggested, "Why don't we just negotiate a percentage that will be used for three years?" Sylbert expressed doubt about the proposal: "We can't guarantee a three-year anything. We need to figure out the numbers each year." Negotiations between the town employees, the Select Board, and the Finance Committee will continue into the new year.

Single Tax Rate Adopted

Stan Ross then switched from his Finance Committee duties into Assessors mode (he also serves on the Board of Assessors). He stated that the Board of Assessors recommends we use one tax rate for all the different classes of property in Monterey: residential, commercial, industrial, and personal property. Monterey's total Class 1 total valuation is $482,769,472.00, up $9 million from last year. Our excess levy capacity is $263,735.56, up $50,000 from last year, and the gross value of our town is $500,000,557.00. A motion was made to accept the Assessors' recommendation for a single tax rate, which was seconded and approved unanimously.

Monterey Flag

The Select Board reviewed the three flag submissions that received the most votes and discovered there may be issues with the proposed design. The board agreed on the design they like best, but the graphics were very low resolution and pixelated. Select Board member Scott Jenssen said that he thought a graphics company could easily fix that. The next question was about copyright: the design uses the town seal, and Sylbert wondered if there could be copyright issues. Just to be safe, the board agreed to consult with Town Counsel to insure there would be no copyright infringement issues going forward.

Police Report

Police Chief Backhaus reported the following Police Department activity for November 21 through December 11:

- Assisted with a medical emergency on Main Rd.
- Suspicious person reported on Cronk Rd; police could not locate the individual.
- MVA on Main Rd; operator left scene and is being charged with several things.
- Assisted fire department with a false alarm.
- Installed new circuit board in radar speed sign—now working.
- Provided traffic control at a fire alarm on Tyringham Rd.
- Assisted with a lockout on New Marlborough Rd.
- Assisted National Grid with a service location on Hupi Woods Cir.
- MVA on Tyringham Rd.
- Building check on Blue Hill Rd.
- Assisted a citizen on Pixley Rd.
- Attempted to serve a summons on Chestnut Hill Rd.
- Stolen property report, Sandisfield Rd.
- Motor vehicle off the road; called tow truck.
- Attempted to serve a warrant for CHINS (Child in Need of Service).
- House check on Main Rd.
- Suspicious activity reported on Main Rd.; police did not find anything.
- Motor vehicle stop that ended in arrest.
- House check on Tyringham Rd.
- False Alarms: Hupi Rd., Main Rd. Gould Rd.

A letter of commendation was received for Officer Johnson. The writer stated that Officer Johnson was patient and sympathetic, which added to his professionalism, and also that she was impressed with his kindness and felt he was an asset to the Monterey Police Department.

Highways and Operations

Director of Operations, Maynard Forbes reported the following Highway Department activities for the week ending December 10:

- Check beaver dams.
- Pick up the 2005 550 in Sandisfield.
- Gravel and grade Cronk Rd.
- Put up delineators on Main, River, and Tyringham Rds.
- Clean out ditch on Mt Hunger Rd.
- Signs on Main Rd.
- Put wing on grader for winter.
- Plow, salt and sand for storm.
- Cut up and remove trees on Cronk, Hupi, Brett, Beartown Mtn., Griswold, New Marlboro, Main, and Mt. Hunger Rds.
- Wash trucks.
- New blade on 4500 snowplow.
- Complete reimbursement paperwork for River Rd. project.
- Driveway issues on Sandisfield Rd.

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Wind Energy Siting
An Open Letter to the Monterey Select Board

Opponents of wind energy development in the Berkshires claim that provisions of the draft legislation known as the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act (H. 1775, S.1666, acronym WESRA) cede local control over the siting and permitting of wind energy facilities to state agencies. This is false.

Under the terms of the law as drafted, local authority to site, permit, and decommission such facilities is essentially the same as local authority to enforce zoning or grant special permits. The local board convenes a public hearing, hears evidence, and makes its judgment. All avenues of appeal end at the Supreme Judicial Court.

These are the details:

The proposed legislation provides for a local wind energy permitting board to be impaneled in any town with a significant wind resource area. This board grants or denies comprehensive permits for wind generating facilities. Opponents of a locally permitted project may appeal to the state Energy Facilities Siting Board; if that board upholds the local decision, final appeal is then made directly to the Supreme Judicial Court.

If the local board denies a permit, the appeal of a proponent of a wind project "follows the existing court appeal process for such decisions."

In other words, those who oppose a local decision to grant a permit get an early review by the ultimate authority (Supreme Judicial Court), whereas appeals of a local decision to deny a permit make the long journey up through all state courts to the SJC. In either case, the local authority is subject to the ultimate judgment of the SJC, as is any decision of a local ZBA, for example, under current law. What is loosely termed "local control" is the same in both cases.

The intent of the so-called one-stop and fast-track provisions of the draft legislation—that local and state permits for wind energy facilities are comprehensive (that is, issued by one entity at each level of government), and that appeals by opponents of a local decision to grant a permit receive early review by the ultimate authority—is to establish an efficient, uniform, statewide permitting procedure. Other provisions of the law establish statewide standards for siting, operation, and decommissioning of wind energy facilities.

The state is taking the initiative in promoting the development of renewable energy resources, a move that everyone concerned about climate change should welcome. Under the provisions of the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act as currently drafted, it remains the task of local government to determine what will be permitted in any particular town.

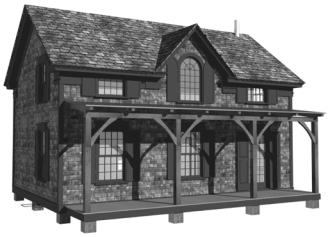
The misunderstanding that swirls around the hot-button term "local control" has become an obstacle to rational efforts to address climate change here. Siting and permitting wind turbines in the Berkshires appropriately and successfully will require all the common sense and civil discourse we can muster. Please don't let misinformation and rhetoric derail the process.

— Peter Murkett, Monterey

From the Tax Collector
3rd Quarter Tax Bills

The fiscal year 2012 Real Estate and Personal Property bills for the **third quarter** will be mailed the first week of January and will be due thirty days from the postmark. The due date will be printed on the bill. If you do not receive your bill, please contact the tax collector's office (413-528-1443 x117). The Commonwealth has NOT yet approved the fiscal year 2012 tax rate. Therefore, the third-quarter bill is another **preliminary** bill based on last year's assessments and tax rate. The fourth-quarter bills containing the **actual** tax amount for the fiscal year 2012 will be mailed in late March and will be due May 1, 2012. Applications for abatements will only be accepted after the actual bills are issued and will be due May 1, 2012.

— Mari Enoch, Monterey Tax Collector



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Moving Forward: Progress on Monterey Community Center

The Monterey Community Center is now a house of dreams (remember the movie *Field of Dreams*?). If we renovate it, will YOU come? We are betting you will and asking for your ideas, support, and talents.

When Edith Wilson, a local artist and philanthropist, died sixteen years ago, she left twenty-eight acres on New Marlborough Road to the town for public use. The Friends of Wilson-McLaughlin House Committee formed to cover the fundraising, clerical, and construction aspects of turning the house into a public venue for community use. Since then, many individuals and groups have assisted with planning and hard work on this project. There have been major accomplishments.

The vision the committee has for the property is a small facility owned by the town and run by volunteers. It is currently large enough to be used for meetings and small classes or workshops. When the building is fully renovated, groups will be able to sign up to use the community center at different days and times depending on their needs. Groups wanting to hold a private function will be able to rent the facility for a fee. If the popularity and frequency of use of the community center warrants it, we could build an addition to provide more space in the future.

Our committee has spent years planning, fundraising, negotiating with the town, and visiting other community centers in small towns to get ideas that could work for the Edith Wilson House. Our next step is to fix up the structure and renovate the first floor for use as a community center. For more details about our progress thus far, see the fact box at right.

If you have any skills we might use in the near future (e.g., fundraising, grant writing) or any questions, we would love to hear from you. We are looking for Monterey residents who want to help move this plan for the community center forward. You don't need to go to every monthly meeting or to commit for the long term. Whatever your desired level of involvement, we can use your input. Thank you.

For additional information, check out our website at www.fwmh.org. You can also mail donations directly to P.O. Box 302, Monterey, MA, 01245. Any gift is appreciated.

Send questions or your interest in helping to mtmountainlaurel@yahoo.com.

— Mary Makuc

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Fact Box

The Friends of Wilson McLaughlin House (FWMH)

- is incorporated, has bylaws and articles of organization
- became a nonprofit group with an IRS 501(c)(3)
- has raised over $53,000 from a combination of fundraisers and grants, including the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and the Turkeybush Foundation
- has a master plan made by a local architect with a commitment to green renovation
- had hazardous materials such as asbestos removed from the house
- had a new roof installed on the house
- worked with the Town to get a driveway constructed, leaving plenty of room for parking for the future
- put in a community garden with 18 plots, which has benefitted the local Food Pantry and involved the Monterey kindergarteners
- has cosponsored other community events such as the Easter Egg Hunt and a Community Fun Day

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Brush Burning Season Opens

Each year, the state allows some Massachusetts towns, including Monterey, to conduct open burning. It is important to remember that when burning, you are subject to certain requirements and responsibilities issued and enforced by the State Fire Marshals Office, DEP, and your local Fire Department.

- Permits can be obtained from January 15 to April 30.
- You must obtain a permit for open burning from the Monterey Fire Department by calling **528-1734.**
- Residents must call on the day they will be burning; no permits are issued ahead of time. The permit is good for one day only.
- Burning hours start at 10 a.m. and all fires must be out by 4 p.m.
- Burning materials will be confined to brush only. **All other materials are prohibited.**
- Burning piles will be kept small and controllable.
- No burning within 75 ft. of a building.
- Have a method of extinguishment and tools available.
- Never leave the fire unattended for any reason.
- Permits are issued weather permitting. Burning is not allowed every day.
- Don't wait until the end of April; you will be disappointed if you wait till the last minute.
- Burning season will not be extended.

Make sure you call for a permit at 528-1734 and leave your name, the address of where you are burning, and a phone number.

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Monterey Library Notes
OOOPS . . .

CWMARS, as reported in last month's *Monterey News* column, was supposed to switch to Evergreen New Year's weekend. In mid December they decided the switchover needed to be postponed for an as-yet-to-be-determined length of time—but it will be at least until February. As library staff we continue to anticipate this switch even more than patrons. One tidbit to pass on to you patrons: you will be able to create your own user name and password, so you won't need to remember your 14-digit library card number to access your account.

The e-book readers are still on display at the library—don't forget to come in and see what the fuss is all about.

Finally, as the end of the calendar year is here I would like to thank all of those people who have volunteered to help make the Monterey Library the place it is. The Friends of the Monterey Library are only a couple of years old but they are a very important part of today's library. The volunteers who have taken on the organizing of the art shows—Julie Shapiro, Libby Wolf, and Ellen Grenadier—deserve special recognition. The shows are well organized, and if you haven't stopped in yet to see one you've missed some great art. The *Monterey Miniatures* exhibit runs through January—and the next opening is sure to be the best-attended event in Monterey in February. An exhibition from Gould Farm will open on February 4 with a reception from 7 to 9 pm.

Of course the Friends hold other fundraisers throughout the year. Through the book sale and the membership drive, the Friends raised much of the money that cleaned and made the Knox Gallery so special. There are also the volunteers who work throughout the years shelving books, covering them, and even working on major projects such as converting the barcodes on many of our items to be compatible with the new delivery sorting system that will come online when enough of the libraries have completed the conversion. THANK YOU ALL FOR ALL YOU DO TO MAKE THE MONTEREY LIBRARY A SPECIAL PLACE FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY! It wouldn't be that way without you.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

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Thank You from the Bidwell House Museum

Thanks to this wonderful community, the Bidwell House Museum celebrated an excellent 21st season as a Berkshires colonial history museum. Our workshops, talks, and walks were very popular and drew visitors to the end of Art School Road all season. Many of you enjoyed the two fundraising parties and supported the museum with your financial contributions. Thank you!

We are particularly pleased to be able to offer programs for school children, with a new education program for local elementary schools and the internship program for high school students. Seven Monterey youths won internships at the Bidwell House this summer: Jacob Edelman, Charlotte Lindsay, Isabel Lindsay, Gabriela Makuc, Joseph Makuc, Sheridan McAlister, and Siobhanne Pope (granddaughter of Gige O'Connell).

A highlight of the year was Township No. 1 Day. On a glorious Saturday, July 2, many of you were among the over 350 people to visit the museum for the free community celebration of Monterey and Tyringham history. Much local talent was to be seen! All three categories of the baking contest were won by your very own Rosemary Cash McAlister. Boy, are her friends and family lucky! Rosemary's Violet Pound Cake won the cake category, followed closely by Carol Edelman's Bidwell Trifle and Alex Puntin's Cupcakes. Rosemary's Johnny Appleseed Pie took first in pies, Betsy Andrus's Peanut Butter Cup Pie came in second, and Amelia von Korff's Gallup Away Lemon Square, third. The bread and muffin category was won by Rosemary's Morning Glory Rolls, with Francesca Gatterburg's Chocolate Zucchini Muffins in second and Joy Flint's Apple Bread winning third place. Congratulations to all!

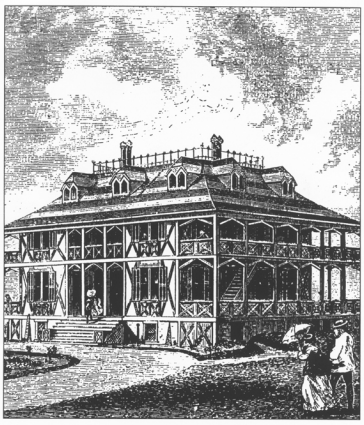
Visitors to Township No. 1 Day also enjoyed other Monterey residents' contributions: rides on the Gould Farm Ox Cart; a demonstration of metal forging by Steve, Ian, and Bruce McAlister; a treasure hunt led by Jacob Edelman; a garden tour and talk by Ruth Green; music by Joel Schick, Peter Poirer, and Karl Finger; a stone wall and old meeting house walk led by Rob Hoogs; and Jon Sylbert as a cake and pie judge. The Monterey Historical Society exhibited a wonderful collection of antique postcard views of the town, thanks to Barbara Tryon, Barbara Swann and Christine Goldfinger.

At other events, Maureen and Michael Banner shared their creative talents leading a Scarecrow Workshop, and Michael Banner and Ruth Green and workshop participants built a grape arbor in the garden. George Emmons researched and led a talk and walk exploring the history of Native Americans in the region. The "Garden Angels" under the leadership of Ruth Green organized the special family Pumpkin Fest in October. Sally and Steve Pullen, Jan Emmons, and Barbara Tryon prepared and served a fabulous lunch to volunteer arborists.

The Bidwell House Museum is grateful for the gifts of time, skills, and resources by members of the community. Whether as a volunteer with the Garden Angels, on a benefit committee, as a program participant, or on the board of directors, Monterey residents are the museum's strongest supporters. The museum could not thrive without you. Thanks go to the Monterey Cultural Council and Select Board for your support of Township No. 1 Day, our programs, and interns. The museum is grateful to the Monterey Highway Department for making Art School Road passable even on the stormiest days.

We are currently planning programs for next summer. Please feel free to call or email me if you have an idea for a talk or workshop. The Bidwell grounds are open for walking or snowshoeing all winter—come on up to enjoy the peace of the site.

With much gratitude,
— Barbara Palmer, Executive Director
528-6888, bidwellhouse@gmail.com



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Julie Shapiro

Knox Gallery First Anniversary Exhibition: *Monterey Miniatures*

The Knox Gallery is pleased to celebrate its first anniversary with the exhibition *Monterey Miniatures*, currently at the Gallery in the Monterey Library through January 28, 2012.

Monterey Miniatures includes work in two and three dimensions in a wide variety of media: sculpture, drawing, painting, ceramics, enamel, collage, and photography. Twenty-nine artists are included in this exhibition. We do have a few true miniatures in the exhibition including those of Lois Ryder, who passed along this traditional definition: "Miniature art differs from small works. The portrayal is usually one-sixth the actual size of the subject. Many fine detailed pictures are done under a magnifying glass. Miniature art has flourished and continues to be fine art on a small scale." Most of the work, which was required to be no more than six inches in any dimension, stretched the traditional definition of a miniature and is perhaps better described as small works.

The work in this exhibition is primarily by artists from Monterey, but we are pleased to include work by artists from some of our surrounding towns. Towns represented in addition to Monterey include Great Barrington, New Marlborough, and Stockbridge, as well as Salisbury, Connecticut. We were thrilled to receive two pieces from a part-time resident that were shipped from Maryland.

The artists exhibiting in *Monterey Miniatures* are Patricia Andrus, Judith Bach, Maureen Banner, Alice Berke, Nicole Campanale, Christine Casarsa, Essy Shapiro Dean, Greenwind DeCelle, Isaac Efrat, Ann Getsinger, Christine Brunowski Goldfinger, Ron Goldfinger, Ellen Grenedier, Isabeth Bakke Harvey, Judy Hayes, Robert Horvath, Wendy G. Jensen, Philip Knoll, Sue Knoll, Sharon Magruder, Glynis Marsh, Rosemary Cash McAlister, Lois Ryder, Gerry Shapiro, Julie Shapiro, Debra Squire, Brook Walsh, Terry Wise, and Elizabeth Wolf.

This show exemplifies the spirit of the Gallery as an exhibition and community space. The Gallery will continue to present a wide variety of work with a Monterey-centric emphasis. It is hoped that it will continue to reach out both conceptually and geographically to present work that will be interesting and stimulating to the community.

The realization of this space, inaugurated a year ago, was made possible with the encouragement and support of the Monterey Library Board of Trustees, the Director of the Monterey Library, The Friends of the Monterey Library, and some dedicated volunteers. During this past year exhibitions have included one person shows by Lew Scheffey, Lois Ryder, Maureen Banner, and Joe Baker. Group exhibitions included quilting by the Monterey Piecemakers; *Monterey on Paper*, a work-on-paper exhibition open to all Monterey residents; So Be Art Club (Philip Knoll, Sue Knoll, Charles Thomas O'Neil, and Julie Shapiro); and an exhibition of work by children from the Monterey Kindergarten.

The next exhibition in the Knox Gallery will feature work from the Gould Farm community. The opening reception will be on Saturday, February 4 from 7–9 pm; all are invited. Please look for more information in the next month's *Monterey News*.

If you are interested in submitting a proposal for an exhibition, please place a short narrative of your proposal along with visual documentation in the exhibition proposal box in the Gallery. Artists who sell work during an exhibition at the library are asked to donate 20 percent of the purchase price to the Friends of the Monterey Library. This helps support the Gallery and other library projects.

— Julie Shapiro

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Get Cuffed Berkshire
A Blood-Pressure-Reduction Program

Berkshire Health Systems' Accent on Health Department and the Tri-Town Health Department were recently awarded a grant to help address hypertension (high blood pressure) in Berkshire County. Get Cuffed Berkshires will bring existing outreach and public health services together to organize evidence-based initiatives to address hypertension in the community.

The Problem: Hypertension is a silent killer. Every 39 seconds, an adult dies of heart attack, stroke, or other cardiovascular disease. In general, the lower one's blood pressure, the lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Some facts and statistics:

One in three adults has high blood pressure.

One in three adults with high blood pressure does not get treatment.

One in two adults with high blood pressure does not have it under control.

High blood pressure is often called the silent killer because many people do not know they have it or how to control it. Nationally, nearly sixty million Americans are at risk for hypertension and pre-hypertension, largely driven by lifestyle factors such as being overweight, physical inactivity, and smoking. In Berkshire County, approximately 17 percent of working people have high blood pressure, which is defined as a reading greater than 140 over 90, and an additional 40 percent are at risk for high blood pressure. Populations with limited access to care, seniors, the homeless, and those with mental illness or disability have an even greater risk.

High sodium (salt) intake raises blood pressure. Most adults should limit sodium intake to between 1,500 and 2,300 milligrams a day. For more information on the harmful effects of high sodium intake, including elevated blood pressure, visit www.cdc.gov/salt/.

The Get Cuffed Berkshires campaign has three goals:

- Implementing a countywide education program aimed at changing the social norm around lifestyle and personal behaviors.
- Providing targeted clinical interventions for high risk people, expanding access to screening and monitoring, and providing 1,000 automatic blood pressure cuffs to the highest risk individuals
- Initiating local policy for dietary sodium reduction and healthier eating options in food-service establishments throughout the county.

A limited number of auto blood pressure cuffs are available free of charge through the grant. If you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure and are having difficulty in getting your blood pressure to goal, home blood pressure monitoring might be helpful. Please call 413-447-3052 for more information about eligibility requirements and availability.

For more information on Get Cuffed Berkshires, visit www.berkshirehealthsystems.org. In addition to the cuff giveaway, the town of Monterey has a monthly public health promotion clinic run by a RN from Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association. Blood pressure readings are monitored, blood glucose levels checked, individual's health concerns are addressed and referrals to community agencies made. Cholesterol screening will be offered at a date to be determined. The clinic is usually held on the second Thursday of the month at the Town Offices from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. Stop in for health promotion monitoring including blood pressure and with your health-related questions and concerns. As always, this clinic is free and open to the public.

Call the Town Hall at 528-1443 for the current date and time.

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Why I Stopped Fishing: Worm Salvation

"It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world, as have these lowly organized creatures." — Charles Darwin

As a kid, on the shores of Saratoga
my grandfather and I
gathered poles and bait
catching our toes
in the first dew—

ducking under apple branches
and black walnuts
past the broken dock
to a boat floating
on water and shale.

His lures dated from the 1930s,
flashing spinners
and kitschy metal insects
yet, we agreed,
the best was
the Live Worm.

For hours, with only bobber and sky—
our worms were swallowed
in a triumphant catch
or drowned in an
unceremonious gasp.

Over thirty years have passed,
since hoisting a pole—
I tried fishing again last night
the worms thrashing
tails & heads
in the best break-dance moves.

Piercing the soft pink flesh
with a rusty hook
the worm broke in half,
squirming in palatable distress—
neither side knowing
where it should go.

I tossed half in the water,
while it patiently waited its fate.
Still alive after ten casts,
(in an act no less cruel
than water boarding)
then it dried in the sun.

Perhaps too many years have passed,
for all I could see
was a worm asks for nothing—
digesting each nugget of earth
crawling in sacrifice
and toil.

I thought of Jesus on the cross,
how a worm does not die
any less horrible a death.

Do they have their own religion?
A beautiful dirt cathedral, with a
giant hook on the wall, and
a worm reverently
draped from the point?

Maybe my grandfather
sits beside them in their pews,
bowing his head as they sing—
'All Things Dark and Digestible' or
'As I Cling to the Old Rusted Hook' . . .

People have become vegetarian for
less!

Hanging up my pole, I'm pulling
worms from the puddles—
seeking salvation
in a soggy gray strand
that longs to
live life.

— Melissa Hamilton

The Beach at Bray

(for James Joyce)

The other side is brighter, flatter, cleaner
Joyce's beach
Where memories kneel to play.
The limping girl goes by
The dog still trots at a tangent
With lolling tongue
And the young men sit in grey-capped silence
Smoking, too indifferent
To pray.
The light deepens,
Stoops and selects oblate golden coins
From the top of the amethyst waters.
Such a one
He tucked in the pocket of his heart
And strolled away
Rich
On a clear-eyed Irish summer day.

— Alice O. Howell

Country Verse della Massa Marittima

cards were dealt long ago
somewhere between a full house
and a royal flush
hillbillies squattin' in some Moroccan venue
in that cafe off the piazza duomo
where all the old dudes chew the lardo
and rub their nasos
talking bout the old days
and the old ways
and how to keep separate
the trash of the past
lashed to the roof of the car
that drove our destinies
from the promiscuous promises
of our pedophilic upbringing
we toast to synchronicity
yielding to the velocity
of love and its other
astrological diabolical
where everyone looks completely sunburnt
sittin' on that chain-linked fence

— Boney Oscar

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Mary Kate Jordan

From the Meetinghouse . . .
Sunrise in the Forest of the New Day

Sunrise is to the new day as January is to the new year. It's an old axiom, but one that hangs around for a reason. It points toward new beginnings as doorways to opportunity, over and over and over again.

No, I'm not talking about that list of resolutions posted on the refrigerator door or lurking unwritten in the paws of conscience. I'm talking about the fact that, yes, sometimes opportunity's a banquet, but when we define "opportunity" so narrowly we tend to overlook an uncomfortable truth. Any feast requires planning as well as providence.

In our culture, "opportunity" usually describes those times when we're the guest of honor, not the host. But, even then, somebody else did what needed to be done, from concept to setup to cleanup. Doing what needs to be done may sound more like drudgery than opportunity, and those are the opportunities most often not taken.

When we look at choices made and opportunities let slide, thinking tends to fall into one of five habitual categories: appreciation, gratitude, indifference, rejection, projection. They're indicators of what we tend to do when the door directly ahead blows open into a blizzard, or when the door's jammed into a broken frame and the doorknob falls off. Habitual thinking patterns show both ingrained ways of experiencing the world and also how to expand and celebrate, or to change, those ways. Each one of those habits of mind plants seeds that grow and change the landscape. The ones we cultivate stand with arms stretched out toward and within us, like the branches of winter trees.

Appreciation's a maple tree. Sometimes she's easy to find, especially right here in New England in the fall. But her sap's not available for sugaring unless somebody does what needs to be done to bring the sap to the sugarhouse. Appreciation's most often present when pouring someone else's syrup onto the pancakes. But for the one who tapped the trees, boiled the sap, bottled the syrup, appreciation deepens into gratitude.

Gratitude's the evergreen of the forest. Her fragrance lifts the heart and her color gives the eyes something sweet to rest on in the (usually by this time) black and white landscape. She provides the soul with living nurture.

Indifference is the opposite of gratitude: an ice-covered branch rising at an angle from a felled tree, a tree long dead and covered with snow. As the cold gets deeper and the snow gets higher, Indifference behaves as if being cased in ice eliminates the process of decay. Attached to the past, she rejects both the present and the future.

Rejection is a hawthorn tree. Her thorns pull on scarves, snag long hair, stab the skin. She never sees that she's doing what she recoils from having experienced from others herself. She's the twin conjoined to projection, and projection's nothing but a fragment of the forest reflected in black ice.

But none of these habits are written in stone. What if you meet the dawn, or whatever time of day your day actually starts, as an opportunity for choice? At least five options are available. Why not plant some appreciation, or even a little gratitude?

Not an easy task, dawn after dawn, morning after morning, day after day. But here in Monterey we have rather extraordinary dawn and morning vistas to support us in the task. And opting for this kind of opportunity might even improve our already glorious landscape, especially when looking from the inside out.

— Mary Kate Jordan

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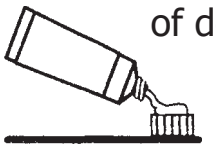

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Political Musings from Monterey

Creating a List of Concrete Ideas

Back in October, I joined the active ranks of Occupy protesters, picketing in front of Great Barrington's town hall. The movement was new and brimming over with potential. I fashioned a homemade sign: "$pe¢ial Intere$t$ have no pla¢e in democracy!" As the months have gone on, I've stopped attending weekly gatherings, more a function of my poor health and the volume of my studies than of waning interest.

But I am still very much a demonstrator in spirit. I've made an effort to stay up-to-date as events have unfolded from Oakland, California, to Moscow. The Occupiers have had immense success in facilitating a switch to credit unions en masse and changing the national dialogue so it is primarily about fashioning an equitable society, not about indiscriminate fiscal austerity. Now that the initiation stage of the Occupy Wall Street movement is over, many people feel the need to move toward a more defined set of goals and proposals.

So, this article presents a few of mine. How can we create a strong economy that works for everyone? I hope you'll consider these potential solutions and maybe take the time to think of a few of your own!

1. Get tough on corporations. Corporations have a huge influence that permeates almost every segment of our politics, corrupting the system and impeding progress. Overturning *Citizens United*, the Supreme Court decision that let corporations spend unlimited amounts on campaigns, would be a good first step to cleaning up Washington. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) has already proposed an amendment to the Constitution that would do so. The major issue with corporate personhood (which enables companies to exercise their right to free "speech" to begin with) is that a corporate entity cannot be jailed for its offenses like a living, breathing person can. How about legislation enabling confiscation of 50 percent of a firm's annual revenue or total assets (whichever is higher) as a toothy punishment for not abiding by the rule of law? Maybe then large conglomerates would think twice about fouling the air, cooking books, and maintaining unsafe working conditions to pad their profit margins. The sticky point with cracking down on corporate misconduct is always the claim that it would hurt small businesses. It doesn't have to. We can pass much-needed increases in regulation and oversight of multinational corporations while simultaneously creating legislation to alleviate the regulatory burden on local businesses, making it easier for them to create jobs.

2. Reform the tax code. Call it a four-step plan. Step one in crafting a fair system of taxation is zeroing out all loopholes, industry subsidies, and credits of the sort that allowed General Electric to pay $0 in taxes. Step two is equalizing the brackets for capital gains and income taxes so that people pay the same rate on money earned in a stock trade as they do on money earned doing real labor. Step three is letting the Bush tax cuts expire to the tune of massive long-term savings. Step four is placing a tax on companies that ship American jobs overseas.

3. Address the problem of poverty. There are more people living in poverty now than at any other point in US history. Social mobility has markedly decreased since the 1980s. How to remedy these vexing problems? One part of the solution is fully funding and improving the efficacy of our education system so that it is better able to give children a one-way ticket out of poverty. Another is increasing the availability of affordable housing. However, the number one thing that can be done in my estimation is to increase the minimum wage to the point where two full-time minimum-wage incomes are sufficient to keep a family of four comfortably above the poverty line. The minimum wage needs then to be tied to the cost-of-living index so that working-class Americans will not be the victims of future Congressional impasses. Finally, the wages of every member of Congress should be the same as the median household income in America. That way, lawmakers have a direct incentive to increase prosperity and ensure that any rising tides will lift all boats.

— Jonah Carlson

More of Jonah's political musings can be found on www.politicalmusingsfrom-monterey.com.

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Human and Proud

Years ago we did a bit of apple grafting around here and wound up with some good-looking rebuilt trees. At least we thought they were good looking. We even went so far as to name one of them "Pride of the Orchard." Why? Because we are human animals and pride is for some damn reason part of our makeup. There's no point fighting it—best to embrace it and make something good of it. If possible.

With the apple tree, I think we had our human tongues in our cheeks, though I can't honestly remember what we were thinking, if anything, way back then. This was, like, thirty years ago, which is a long time for the proud human to keep track of. I could speculate (Human and Speculating . . .) that to us this tree in its youth looked every bit as good as any we might have bought at a nursery and taken good care of for a few years, resulting in a prize-winning specimen. Human and Prize-winning.

Besides being proud of the wild gifts in our woods, which we found growing here already and cleared around and reworked to suit our image of what's handsome, we human animals have a lot going for us that we ought to notice and lift up. One would be our bodies. I know this is not so easy for some of us, but it's our job as pride-susceptible animals to take a friendly look.

One thing we have is a nice smile, and a ready response to that same thing on the faces of others of our species. Another is our two fine legs. I read (must be true) that we humans are the best runners among the land mammals! (This implies some of the marine mammals run better than we do . . . ?) I read this in *Born to Run*, which is a book to make you proud. According to it, we can run longer (apparently the same thing as better) than any of our terrestrial pals, including the famous cheetah, and even the horse. There is an annual foot race in Arizona where humans and horses both run, on their own legs, and the humans win! Yes, pride. According to this book, the secret is that we sweat so we don't get over-heated and can keep on running after the horse has to stop to cool off in order to avoid brain-damage. Not such a concern for us, obviously, because we can sweat all over and cool down, even while we keep on running. According to this book, humans who go jogging or running with their dogs along have to stop and wait for the dogs sometimes, which can only cool off through panting and a little palm sweating, so refuse to run any more when the system is about to overheat.

Maybe this was Arizona. Here in cool Monterey, I do not run, with or without my dog, but maybe some folks do.

What we do with our dogs is walk. In fact, what we ought to be doing in general is walk. We have evolved for it, and those two fine legs do best when they get in a lot of it. In fact, the whole body and the whole human being do best when they walk a ton. I know this not only because I read so much, but because I walk.

I have always walked, like from the bed to the breakfast table and from the car to the post office. Some days I have even walked from the car to the office, or the car to the mall, or even the car to the dentist's office. I have always been a big walker.

Something happened about a year and a half ago that changed things for me. I fell all the way down the cellar stairs and went in an ambulance and things happened and when I got home again I could not drive a car for six months. During this time I walked even more. I also drove a lot less, like totally. I found out what happens when you walk to the post office: you take all

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morning to get there and back, and you see a lot. You even see your neighbors, who may be zipping into or out of their cars, but they see you walking and they slow way down and say hi for a while.

You notice things along Route 23 that you have been zipping by for the last five generations, with your mind on where you are headed next or what's on the radio, or who knows what. When walking on your two fine legs, you see what's just around you, for real, from horizon to horizon (Hunger Mountain, Chestnut Hill) or maybe directly underfoot (cracked asphalt, a flattened white pine cone). You also feel and notice something: your human body. It is stretching a little, breathing deep. That back is straightening up, hands a little chilly and snuggling into pockets which are warm because you are alive at 98.6 Fahrenheit. The wind is off the lake, out of sight down there but reaching you because you have fabulous skin that can feel such things. Even your hair is riffling some, and what sensors you have in your scalp!

Yes, you are a human animal and so well equipped it would make any geek sit up and take notice, maybe even stand up and take notice. Maybe even walk out that door and breathe deeply.

What we have here, ladies and gentleman, female and male human animals, is something to be proud of, something to notice. Best way, first way: go out and walk. Be proud and be glad because this is a good thing.

— Bonner J. McAllester

Youth Foreign Travel Grant Applications Due February 1

The Alice and Richard Henriquez Fund/Youth World Awareness Program, a fund of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, is accepting grant applications through February 1 from high school students and nonprofit organizations to support travel and humanitarian efforts in foreign countries by young people ages fourteen to twenty-two.

The Alice and Richard Henriquez Memorial Fund was formed in 1995 to "encourage the development of peace among nations and justice for all people by funding international experiences for young men and women in their intellectually formative years." Mr. Henriquez believed that "an understanding of other people and their cultures, as well as sensitivity to the destabilizing effect of social and economic injustice is what young men and women will need if they are to effectively contribute to a peaceful and just world in their adult lives."

A committee of local residents reviews the applications based upon the potential impact of the experience on the applicant, his or her ability to carry out the project, and the likelihood of the project to have a positive impact on the community served. The next deadline for the Alice and Richard Henriquez Fund/Youth World Awareness Program grant application is February 1, 2012.

For information or applications contact Berkshire Taconic 413-229-0327, www.berkshiretaconic.org.

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation builds stronger communities and improves the quality of life for all residents of northwest Litchfield County, CT; Berkshire County, MA; and Columbia County and northeast Dutchess County, NY, acting as an agent for positive change in the region.

Gabriella Makuc Wins Award

Congratulations to Gabriella Makuc, a senior at Mount Everett, who has been awarded the Superintendent's Certificate of Excellence. Gabi, the daughter of Mark and Mary Makuc, plans on a double major in college, in music and the humanities.

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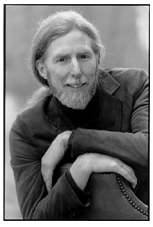

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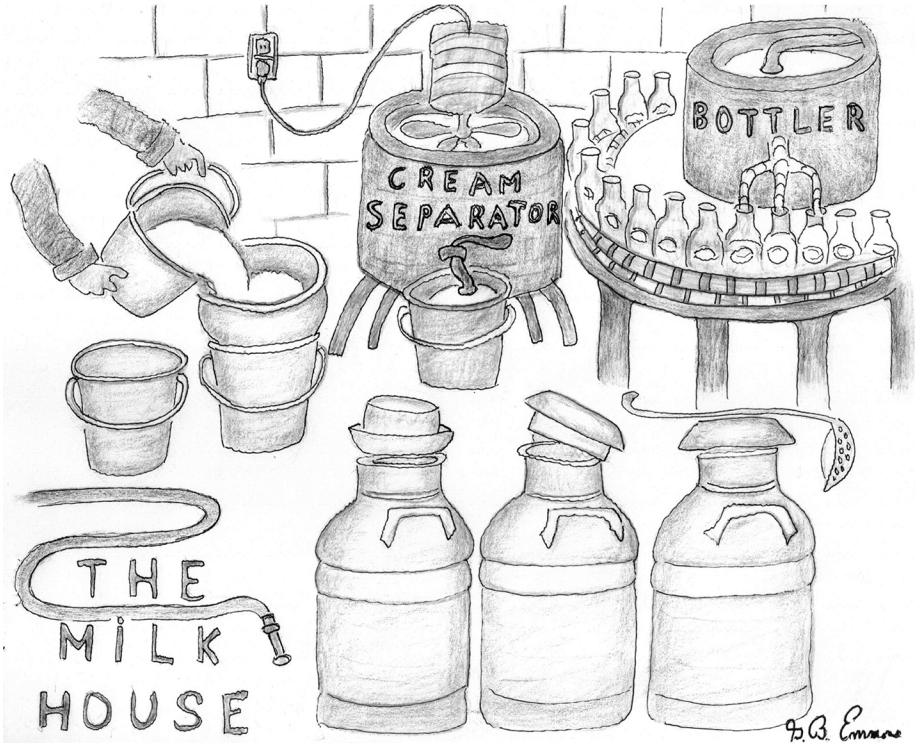
The Dairy

Webster's Dictionary defines a dairy as a farm specializing in milk production. In Monterey, that might include Rawson Brook Goat Farm even though their hallmark product is cheese, but certainly Gould Farm, which has our last remaining herd of milking cows. However, if you want to learn more about the number of mom and pop farms that lined our country lanes in the past, our library has a copy of *Monterey, A Local History*, edited by Peter Murkett, published in 1997 for the 150th anniversary of the town.

First and foremost is Dick Tryon's article "Farming in Monterey," with a map of all the old homesteads and descriptions of their early operation as well as their eventual demise because of pricing and government regulations. Of equal importance is "Woodburn Farm," an oral history by Sheldon Fenn, edited by Ian Jenkins, as well as an article by Mark Makuc about his youth experiences working for Sheldon entitled "Woodburn Boy." Kim Hines's "Gould Farm:



A Community Within A Community" tells about the therapeutic benefits and life learning experiences on a working farm. Fortunate indeed is Monterey for visitors who bring their children and grandchildren to Gould Farm to see a fully diversified barnyard of animals and poultry all together in one location.

Also for children who would learn the lessons of growing up in an agricultural age, the library has a helpful children's book *Out and About at the Dairy Farm*, written by Andy Murphy and illustrated by Anne Mullen.

Most dairies had a separate location for processing their product separate from the farm animals, called a milk room. There the milk was cooled down from the milking machines and then put through a cream separator for later making cheese and butter. In the days before pasteurization, raw milk was considered beneficial for growing good bones in children. The milk room was a nerve center for sanitation because there were periodical regular scheduled visits by a state inspector, as well as several surprise visits for measuring bacteria count.

The Monterey town emblem for the Sesquicentennial, "'Tis The People That Make The Town" is certainly true, but it was the farming that brought the people in the first place with a lifeline of subsistence that flowed through the dairy.

— George B. Emmons

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Christmas in the City

I am a country girl and I like my country Christmas traditions. This year, working from home the week before Christmas was not an option; such are the realities of being swallowed up by the real world. Therefore, in order to experience some of the holiday spirit, my roommate and I decided that we would get a wreath and a tree, listen to Christmas music, and bake cookies.

On Saturday morning, December 10, I had a conference. After programming ended, I changed into jeans and sneakers, pulled out my winter gloves, and met my roommate at Eastern Market. They sell live things there, items that smell like the woods. It's great. My roommate is a newbie when it comes to having a live tree, which made it even more entertaining.

We selected our tree, just slightly taller than I am—five feet, in case anyone is actually wondering about that detail. "He trimmed off the bottom to ensure the tree is fresh and absorbing water," I explained seeing my roommate's curious look. We also purchased a cheap plastic stand, which is a piece of junk, but it will suffice for now. On our way back to the Metro, we purchased a wreath as well, and it cost as much as the tree; human labor has its cost.

Then, the tree adventure really began. First, the man selling newspapers on a street corner saw us and started singing "O Tannenbaum." We got a few looks before we reached the Metro escalators and the tree got its own step on the way down, just like your suitcase might, or your baby stroller if you ignore the signs that say "No strollers, use the elevator." The Metro attendants said nothing to us as we swiped into the system through the handicap gate. I can only wonder about their internal commentary.

We got only a few sideways looks, kids pointing and so on, while waiting for our first train. Most people just seemed really curious. Standing out of the way once we were in the car, I was acutely aware of the smell of woods on the train. Surprisingly, we were the only ones (that I've ever seen) on the Metro with a tree that isn't small enough to sit on the dinging room table. I have no idea why; it's easy to do and you can avoid parking and a lot of other annoyances that come with picking up a tree. I love public transportation. To be fair, a tree on Metro during rush hour would not be an option—in fact, that would be a gigantic pain in the neck. I know that now, but originally I'd considered going after work.

While we were waiting for our second train, two very flamboyant youth approached us and asked if they could get their picture taken with our tree. As I stepped back, I couldn't help wondering whether it was the novelty of a tree in the Metro, or a tree all together. How many children these days, in the city, grow up with a fake tree? How many children in general grow up with a fake tree? The smell is so fundamental to my Christmas experience; it's inconceivable to go without a live tree. But, I bet if you don't grow up with it, it's not so important.

My roommate carried the tree the rest of the way home once we got off the train. We got into the elevator in our building, and the gentleman who got in with us did a double take. He pressed the button for his floor, then looked at us again: "Is that real?"

We nodded yes, with big grins. He then leaned over and inhaled deeply: "Smells good."

Proudly, I responded, "That's why we decided to get it; we want our apartment to smell like the Christmas season."

My roommate said, "This is my first real tree." I'm thankful she was so enthusiastic about it; he just grinned at us.

We carried the tree into the apartment and managed to get it to stand up straight. We put on a few ornaments and sparkling white lights. The corner of our apartment is no longer sad and empty, and our entire apartment feels festive. The wreath smell welcomes us in the evenings, calling us down the hall toward home. The cookies smelled great, the music makes us sing along, and somehow it still feels like the holiday season, even hundreds of miles from home.

I returned to Monterey briefly the weekend before Christmas to be present for our annual office party and to partake in some of my childhood holiday traditions. Mom and I went into the woods, sawed down our tree, and carried it home. We put it up with our real stand and brought out the personal ornaments, each with its story. Part of being an adult is learning to create your own traditions, without replacing the ones from your past. It takes time to get it right, but as real life tightens its grip, it becomes a necessity. Still, I get to spend a bit over a week at home so I absolutely can't complain in the long run.

This year, as things continue to change—some for the good and some bad—I find myself continually grateful for my home, family, and friends. Wishing you all a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

— Tarsi Dunlop

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"Garden Gustation"
What's cooking from Monterey Gardens & Farms

Have a healthy, particularly Corny and Popping New Year!

Happy New Year! As always it's hard to believe another year has passed. As the New Year appears, the opportunities for change and resolutions somehow simmer in our brains. One of mine is SIMPLIFY! I'm going to start this year's "Gustations" with an incredibly simple and healthy recipe. POPCORN!

We just started growing popcorn in 2010, so we only have two seasons of popcorn growing under our belts, so to speak. Both years we've grown a few rows of Fedco's Robust popcorn. One thing is important to remember: plant the popcorn a good distance from other types of sweet or grain corn that are being planted or there will be hanky-panky in the garden! This year the Robust popcorn really was robust, including the stalks (many of them 10 ft. tall), only to have a hurricane Irene threatening our not quite ready crop. I had read about what other gardeners/farmers were doing to protect their crops from the impending doom and wondered if we should take some action.

Initially we thought that we would just let Mother Nature take her course and live with the consequences. When the storm was nearly upon us we decided to move our vehicles out of our driveway and away from the tall trees lining it. Persuaded by my suggestion, my husband, Stephen, moved our 4-Runner up onto the grass running parallel to the popcorn. I thought if nothing else, it might be a bit of a wind screen for the tall, susceptible plants. Stephen was gone longer than I thought was necessary, and when I looked outside there were now two 2 x 6 x 16-foot-long boards being tied off to the roof rack. Stephen loves rope. Next the popcorn was being lassoed up in arm length bunches and tied off to the boards on top of the 4-Runner. It really looked like a redneck solution, but I guessed that something was better than nothing and we had nothing to lose. We had a good laugh at the resulting "tie-down." Funny enough, the corn went through the windy storm nearly unscathed! Ha!

Stephen Moore

Within the next couple of months I harvested the ears. Using a technique I learned from Bonner McAllester, I pulled the husks back from the ears and tied them together to make an attractive chain of popcorn ears to hang in the studio to continue to dry, out of reach of varmints. By Christmas time we are able to twist the ears to remove the kernels and start enjoying the popcorn ourselves and also to fill small bags to give away as gifts. The dryer they are, the better they pop.

Popcorn doesn't really need a recipe; I think most everyone knows how to make it. I use the old-fashioned stovetop method.

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If you have a bit of a sweet tooth, the following recipe might suit your taste for a semi-healthy snack. Otherwise, just omit the sugar. Popcorn is a SIMPLE, fun, tasty whole grain snack.

Sweetened Popcorn with Salt

½ cup homegrown popcorn kernels

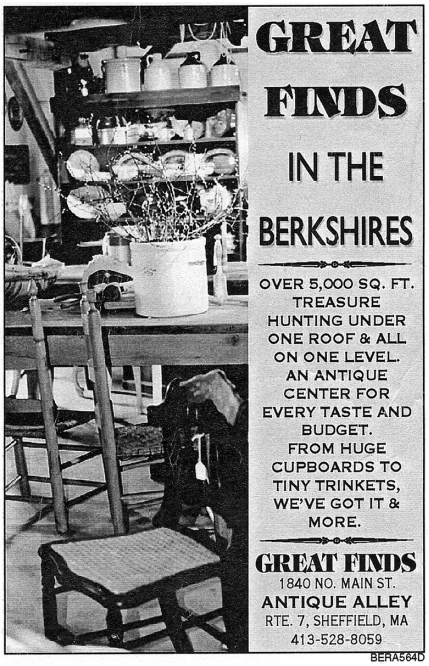
Enough canola oil to cover the bottom of a 3-quart lidded, handled pot/saucepan

2 Tablespoons granulated sugar

Have a popcorn receiving bowl ready. This recipe will make about 4–6 cups of popped corn. Pour the oil into the pot and set over high heat. Watch the pot carefully, as all of this happens fairly quickly. Add the popcorn to the oil along with the sugar. Swirl the popcorn/oil/sugar together. Let the mixture heat up and frequently swirl the ingredients. The idea is to NOT have the popcorn stick or burn on the bottom of the pot. Soon the popcorn will begin popping, first a little and then a lot. Shake the pan often to keep the popcorn kernels moving on the bottom. When the popping tapers off, remove the pot quickly from the heat and pour the contents into the awaiting bowl. The popcorn will be glistening with the sugar coating. Add enough salt to taste and enjoy with a good seed catalogue!

Happy New Year!

— Wendy G. Jensen
wendygj@gmail.com



Maynard Forbes

Michelle Arnot-Brown

December Wildlife Report

Early in the month, Ann Higgins saw two buck deer in antlers. They were not the same two seen at Gould Farm in November, presumably, whose antlers were locked together. (See photo, from Maynard Forbes.) This happens sometimes when moose, elk, or deer get to struggling with each other in territorial or other disputes. If they remain tangled, of course it is fatal to both of them. There are accounts of skeletons found with the antlers locked.

Tim Lovett has seen a black squirrel, always a remarkable sight. These are color variations of our familiar grey squirrels, said to have been spreading westward from Westfield for some decades.

Will and Glynis Marsh report big turkeys cleaning up under their bird feeders on River Road, and we have seen plenty of scuffed-up leaves from foraging turkeys along the Land Trust Trail this month. An open winter is good for the foragers, hard on the foragées,

Michelle Arnot-Brown sent a photo of a large dog-like track, from Bosworth Road in Sandisfield. We are guessing it is a mighty big coyote, or dog, all the more unusual as this creature left only one track.

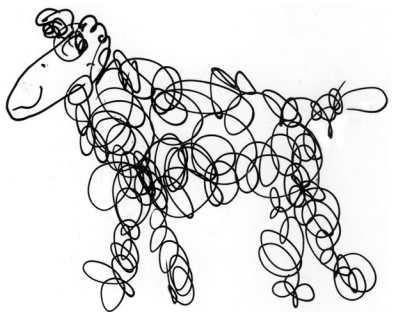
I saw an otter last week on Royal Pond, in shallow water on ice, working over some treasure with its capable front feet.

Michelle Brown on Point Road, Lake Garfield, reports a bald eagle there, in handsome adult plumage, also a fox that walks across the ice. She sees this every winter, maybe the same fox.

And thanks, also, for Steve Snyder's observation of a five-foot shark in the British Virgin Islands. It's wild, it's life, it's wildlife. Just like you and me.

Thank you for these sightings and keep them coming.

— Bonner McAllester
528-9385, bmca@berkshire.net.



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Atlas Shrugged
Apollo 18
Cave of Forgotten Dreams
Friends with Benefits
Sarah's Key
Snow Flower and the Secret Fan
Vera
Margin Call
12 Angry Men
Water for Elephants
Smurfs
Winnie the Pooh Movie

Adult Fiction

The Sense of an Ending, Julian Barnes
The Third Reich, Robarto Bolaño
The Artist of Disappearance, Anita Desai
The Time in Between, Maria Duenas
River of Smoke, Amitav Ghosh
The Printmaker's Daughter, Katherine Govier
The Great Leader, Jim Harrison
Breaking Point, Dana Haynes
Mr. Kill, Martin Limón
Shards, Ismet Prcic
The Impossible Dead, Ian Rankin
The Schoolmaster's Daughter: A Novel of the American Revolution, John Smolens
D.C. Dead, Stuart Woods

Adult Nonfiction

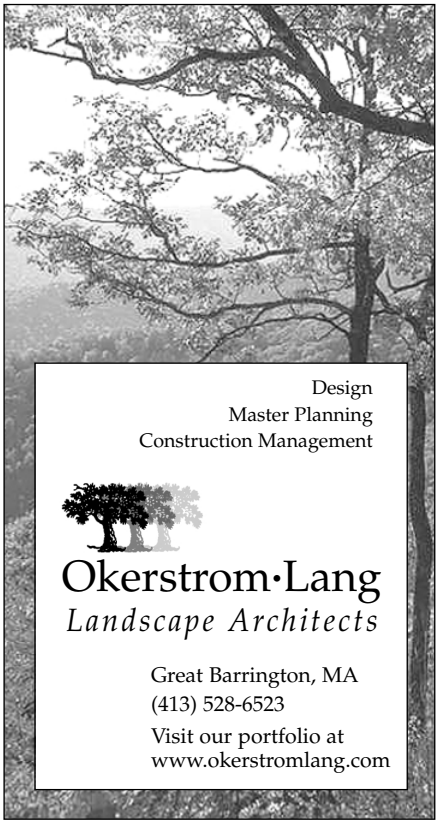
The Family Meal: Home Cooking with Ferran Adrià
Earth: The Operator's Manual, Richard B. Alley
My Song: A Memoir, Harry Belafonte
Steve Jobs, Walter Isaacson
Catherine the Great: Portrait of a Woman, Robert Massie
Grand Pursuit: The Story of Economic Genius, Sylvia Nasr
Beautiful Unbroken: One Nurse's Life, Mary Jane Nealon
The Shakespeare Thefts: In Search of the First Folios, Eric Rasmussen
Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past, Simon Reynolds
Survival of the Beautiful, David Rothenberg
Small Memories: A Memoir, José Saramago
And So It Goes: Kurt Vonnegut: A Life, Charles J. Shields
Wicked Bugs: The Louse that Conquered Napoleon's Army & Other Diabolical Insects, Amy Stewart
Pacific Crucible: War at Sea in the Pacific, 1941–1942, Ian W. Toll
Midas Touch: Why Some Entrepreneurs Get Rich—and Why Most Don't, Donald J. Trump & Robert T. Kiyosaki
The Steampunk Bible: An Illustrated Guide to the World of Imaginary Airships, Corsets and Goggles, Mad Scientists, and Strange Literature, Jeff VanderMeer
The Royal Stuarts, Allan Massie

Young Adult

The Future of Us, Jay Asher & Carolyn Mackler
The Canterbury Tales (graphic), Geoffrey Chaucer, adapted by Seymour Chwast
Gifted Teen Survival Guide Judy Galbraith & Jim Delisle
Legend, Marie Lu
Wildwood, Colin Meloy

Children Picture

The Rhinoceros, Jon Agee
Namah and the Ark at Night, Susan Campbell Bartoletti
The Death-Ray, Daniel Clowes
Neville, Norton Juster
Little Owl's Night, Dirya Srinivasan
The Bippolo Seed and Other Stories, Dr. Seuss
Solomon Crocodile, Catherine Rayner



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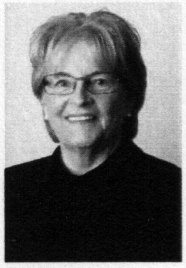
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Community Potluck Jan. 18

The December Potluck was a great discussion of the season and celebration of the festivals of light by Mary Kate Jordan. Thanks very much to her for her timely and upbeat presentation.

For the January community potluck, we have local author and fabric designer MaryPaul Yates, whose firm, Yates Design Inc., provides innovative color, design, and marketing solutions to a diverse, international, residential, and contract interior furnishings clientele. She says, "Although we are touching fabric nearly every moment of our lives, most of us don't give the origin of fabric much thought—on either the level of how a shirt got into a store, or how fabric-making has evolved through the ages." She will give us a whirlwind tour through history and across cultures and encourage listeners to consider the important role that cloth plays in civilization.

The next Monterey Community Potluck Dinner will be held in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse at 6 pm on January 18. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and a place setting and silverware for yourself. Everyone is welcome.

— Barbara Dahlman & Kyle Pierce

Contributors

We thank the following for recent contributions. Your support makes it possible for us to keep on going.

Richard DeMartino

Monterey News

The *Monterey News* is an independent nonprofit corporation dedicated to fostering communication in the Monterey community. Our editorial address is P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs. Submissions may also be left in the drop box on the loading dock of the General Store. Address requests for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4347 or e-mail montereynews9@gmail.com.

Calendar

Every Monday except holidays: Select Board meeting, Town Hall, 6 pm.

Every Tuesday: Zumba Class, 5:30–6:30 pm, Monterey Firehouse. $10/class.

Through January 28: *Monterey Miniatures* exhibition, Knox Gallery, Monterey Library. See p. 10.

Sunday January 1: Happy New Year! Transfer station open .

Monday, January 2: Town Offices, Library closed for New Year's.

Monday, January 16: Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday. Town Offices, Library closed.

Wednesday, January 18: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 pm, Monterey Meetinghouse. Local author and fabric designer MaryPaul Yates will speak on history of fabric. Free, everyone welcome. See this page.

The Observer
November 26–December 25

High temp. (11/28, 29)	59°
Low temp. (12/18)	9°
Avg. high temp.	43.1°
Avg. low temp.	26.3°
Avg. temp.	34.7°
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	4.71 in.
Snowfall	4.3 in.

Precipitation occurred on 12 days.

Transfer Station Winter Hours

Sunday	10 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Wednesday	8 a.m.–1 p.m.
Saturday	8 a.m.–1 p.m.

Monday, January 23: Adult book group will discuss *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford, 7:30 pm, Monterey Library. Newcomers welcome.

Saturday, January 28: Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 pm, Dewey Hall, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel, caller Peter Stix. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $8–10, children $5. Information 528-9385.

Saturday, February 4: Opening reception for exhibition of works by Gould Farm artists, 7–9 pm, Knox Gallery, Monterey Library.

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Contributions from local and guest artists this month:
Pat Arnow, pp. 6, 22; Maureen Banner, p. 11,
George Emmons, p. 18; Tristian Goik, p. 8;
Bonner McAllester, p. 16; MaryPaul Yates, p. 21.

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